

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

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February memory verse Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Includes John MacArthur : Bible Introductions - Ephesians

Let's turn in our Bibles to Ephesians.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God ([Eph 1:1](#)),

So Paul is just declaring his own calling. What I am, I am by the will of God, and that is what is important. For many years I had a difficult problem, because I sought to be "Chuck, the evangelist by the will of God," but I wasn't. God never did call me to be an evangelist, and my endeavor to be an evangelist was totally futile, frustrating, defeating. It wasn't until I decided to kick the mold of the denomination that I was in, which held up evangelist as the highest calling, and just be what God had equipped me to be and ordained me to be: Chuck, a pastor-teacher by the will of God, that I began to experience a real fulfillment in my ministry. Up until then, the ministry was hard. It was a grind. It was a push. I was trying to be something God didn't make me for. And you know, that's the hardest thing in the world to try to be something that God didn't make you.

The Bible says, "Make your calling and election sure." Know what you are by the will of God. Because if you are what you are by the will of God, then you have pleasure in what you are and what you are doing, and when your work becomes your pleasure, then you are a happy person.

Paul, an apostle by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus ([Eph 1:1](#)),

You may say, "Well, that lets me out." The only part that lets you out is the "of Ephesus." It is a tragedy, really, that the church decided to "saint" certain people for special honors. We make him a saint. The church never made anybody a saint. The Lord creates the saints, not the church. And as far as the Lord is concerned, you are all saints if you love Him and follow Him. It's not a special category for super Christians. It's a common title for those who love the Lord and believe in Him. "Saint Charles," I will accept the title. But if that bothers you, Paul goes ahead and includes you in the rest of it there.

and to the faithful in Christ Jesus ([Eph 1:1](#)): So this letter is to you.

In this first verse he introduces, really, the sort of the underlying tone of the whole epistle, and it is in the words "in Christ Jesus." So as you go through this epistle, it will

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

be helpful if you will take your pen and you will underline all of the things that you have, that God has done for you in Christ, through Christ. And you will find the phrases, "in Him," "by whom," "in whom," "through whom," "through Him," and all of these things that you are and have through and in Jesus Christ. And you find this reoccurring throughout the entire epistle. And so this almost becomes the key word that will unlock the epistle as he tells you all that you are, all that God has done for you, all that God is going to do for you, all that God wants to do for you, in Christ Jesus. So do underline as you go through and it will help it to be drawn back to your memory.

Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ ([Eph 1:2](#)).

Grace and peace, coupled together, over and over throughout the New Testament. Always in this order, for you cannot know the peace of God until you first experience the grace of God.

For years I went in my Christian experience without really knowing the peace of God in my heart. Because I was under a work relationship with God, trying so hard, and I never had peace. I really never had assurance of my salvation until I discovered the grace of God. And in the discovery of the grace of God, I then had assurance of my salvation, and I experienced the peace of God, and it was glorious. And that I think, probably, is one of the reasons why I emphasize the grace of God so much in my ministry, is that brought such a depth of peace and blessing to my own life to experience it after serving the Lord for years.

"From the Lord Jesus Christ." Now a lot of people think that is first, middle, and last name. Not so. His name is Jesus. It is the Greek for the Hebrew Yeshua. The Hebrew name is Yeshua, is a name which means, or is a contraction of "Jehovah is salvation." One of the compound names of Jehovah, Yeshua. The Greek name is Jesus. And they were instructed to call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. The Lord is salvation, call Him Yeshua, for He shall save His people from their sins. The word *Christ* is the Hebrew word *Messiah*, and it tells His mission. He is God's promised Savior, the anointed one, the Messiah. And Lord is His title. Now, our problem is that we use it as His name, rather than His title. And thus, we use it loosely and oftentimes in vain. Many people take the name of the Lord in vain, because they use the term Lord as a name, rather than a title. It signifies my relationship with Him. If He is Lord, then I am the *doulos*, I am the slave, I am the bond slave. And it is important that I establish this relationship with Him as Lord and servant.

Now Paul gets immediately into the issues that he wants to talk to them about.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places ([Eph 1:3](#))

And there you have it: in Christ ([Eph 1:3](#)):

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Notice, first of all, that he is thanking God for the spiritual blessings. There is an awful lot, in fact, too much talk today about material blessings. And those that are going around advocating how that every saint of God should experience all kinds of material blessings and the testimonies are of the material blessings. Sometimes I don't know if I am in an Amway meeting or a church service as people testify of the material blessings. Paul is thanking God for the spiritual blessings. And when you hear a person giving thanks to God, note what he is thanking God for, because it can surely indicate the person's place spiritually. If a person is really walking after the Spirit and is interested in things of the Spirit, he is going to be thanking God for the spiritual blessings. But if a person is a materialist and is very interested in the material things, he is going to be talking always about the material blessings. "But beware of those," the Bible says, "who declared that godliness is a way to material prosperity, from such turn away." He is thanking God for the spiritual blessings.

And he is going to spend the first three chapters of Ephesians sort of enumerating these spiritual blessings that we have in and through Jesus Christ. He is going to tell you for three chapters now what God has done for you.

I think that one of the greatest problems in the church today arises from the fact that in the church we are always hearing what we ought to be doing for God. I grew up on that kind of a diet. Every service that I attended, it seems, I was being told what I ought to be doing for God, and I wasn't doing what I ought to be doing for God. And I was very miserable and I felt convicted constantly, because I was failing. I ought to be doing more for God, I ought to be doing this for God, and the other thing for God, all I ought to be doing for God. There were many things I wanted to do, but I just was weak. I ought to be praying more, and so I go down on Sunday night, and I'd pray, "God, I am going to pray more this week." But I didn't. Then I would feel guilty, and next Sunday night I would go back and repent for not praying more last week, and, "This next week I will do it, Lord." But every Sunday night there was repentance for my failures this last week. I ought to be reading the Bible more, "God, I am going to read the Bible more," but I didn't. I wanted to. I ought to be witnessing more. But I didn't. Always feeling guilty because I was failing to be or to do all that I ought to be doing for God. Half of the problem was that I didn't know how. For years in my ministry I followed the pattern that I knew by growing up. I was telling the people constantly what they ought to be doing for God.

First many years of my ministry I was always half mad with the people. Because I wanted to be an evangelist, because that is what the denomination recognized. I wanted to see souls saved, because the first thing I had to report on my report every month was how many people were saved this month. Terrible to put zeros in there. The hierarchy, the bishops will never recognize you unless you have converts. And so I had prepared some of the most fantastic evangelistic sermons. I mean, they could convince the hardest sinner that he ought to commit his life to Jesus Christ. And I would go to church all supercharged with this powerful dynamic message, I mean no sinner can reject this message. And I would get to church and I would look around, and there wouldn't be a sinner in the house. I knew everybody by first name. What are you going

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

to do? No sinners to preach this powerful message to. Can't change my message now. I don't have anything else to preach. I will have to preach this powerful salvation message to all of these saints. That is frustrating. And I let my frustration be known by laying it on the saints. I put a little addendums to my message, of how they had so failed God, that if they were doing what they should be doing this church would be full of people tonight. Sinners to hear the gospel message. "You should have your neighbors with you this evening." And I would really lay it on the poor saints, and their heads would go down, down, down. I was laying the lash across their backs, beating them, total failures in their Christian walk. I have got to preach this powerful salvation to saints, that is not fair.

So I developed a congregation of frustrated, guilt-ridden saints. And I would make my appeal to reconsecrate your life to Jesus, at least I could get people forward. Oh, God bless. You notice I dedicated my last book to those people way back when. Those blessed saints that endured my whippings every Sunday, and came back for more--that is the surprising thing. As their head would go down and they'd feel guilty, "Yes, I have failed God. Oh, I am so sorry, Lord. I should be doing more for You. I know I should. But, God, I don't know how. This dumb pastor isn't teaching me anything besides salvation." It was really my fault. I never took them beyond salvation. I never brought them into the walk in the Spirit, in the life of the Spirit, into growth and maturity in the Word.

One day God changed my ministry. I became a pastor-teacher, got rid of my evangelistic sermons and started to feed His sheep, to make them strong, and there was a dramatic change in my own ministry. As I quit beating the sheep and started feeding the sheep, the sheep started getting strong. They started getting healthy, and you know what happened? As they got strong and healthy, they started to reproduce. They now have something to share with their neighbors. Christ became their life. Witnessing wasn't something they were doing anymore, it was something that they were. Their lives changed by the Word of God and the power of the Spirit. They became witnesses, and the effect of it was that their witness began to go out throughout the neighborhood, and their neighbors began to come and be saved. And the church began to be blessed and grow.

The church has been emphasizing much too long what you ought to be doing for God, the Bible doesn't emphasize that. The Bible emphasizes what God has done for you. "Thanks be unto God who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings," and he takes three chapters now to tell you all that God has done for you. And it is not until he has told you for three chapters what God has done for you that he turns around then and says, "Now walk worthy of this glorious calling." He doesn't tell you what you ought to be doing for God until, first of all, establishing for you what God has done for you. And that is the proper order, because you can't be what you ought to be without that which God has already done for us. In other words, God's work has to be first in my life.

And in the New Testament, the order is always that way. You will never find the reversed order. Before what you should be doing for God is always what God has done

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

for you. "Thank God," Peter said, "that we have been born again into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fades not away, that is reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God" ([1 Peter 1:3-5](#)). All of this is what God has done for you. Thanks be unto God, we have been born again to this living hope because Jesus rose from the dead. We have an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, fades not away. That is all what God has done for you. Reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, it is God that is keeping you.

Well, you say, "Don't I have anything to do?" Yea, through faith just believe it, that's all He requires. For you to believe that work that He has done for you. And so, we ought to follow the New Testament pattern, declaring the glorious works of God in our behalf.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessings, in these heavenlies in Christ Jesus. Starting off now,

According as he hath chosen us in him ([Eph 1:4](#))

God chose me. That thrills me. It used to scare me. I used to argue against that. That isn't fair that God should choose. I didn't like the doctrine of divine election. I don't know why I didn't, inasmuch as He elected me. But somehow my rational mind was wrestling with that. I am glad that God gave me the choice. I appreciate this capacity of choice. I recognize the awesome responsibility that goes with it. But I am glad that God gave me the opportunity to choose the one that I was going to spend the rest of my life with. I would have just hated to have someone dumped on me. I appreciate that choice. But I would deny God that same right. God, You don't have a right to choose who You want to spend eternity with.

"According as He has chosen us." It is interesting that Paul has that at the top of his list. And I think that it is appropriate. The top of our list should be the fact that God chose us. What a blessing, what a glorious blessing that God should choose me to spend eternity with Him. Now the amazing thing is, when God chose me, and this gives us a little clue in the whole thing,

chosen us in him before the foundation of the world ([Eph 1:4](#)),

Now God didn't choose me after I decided to clean up my act and live for Him. God didn't say, "Oh, all right, I will chose him." God chose me before the foundations of the world. Now, that gives you the key into God's choices. Having chosen me before the foundation of the world indicates that He chose me according to His foreknowledge. Because God knows all things, He will never learn anything new. If He can learn anything new, then He doesn't know all things. James said, "Known unto Him are all things from the beginning." So it is according to His foreknowledge, because He knew in advance. He chose me on the basis of His foreknowledge.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Now, this is where we have difficulty with the concept of the foreknowledge of God and predestination, and election, and chosen in Him. We have problems because we can't think with that capacity, or with that advantage. It must be... I don't even know if you have to think when you have that advantage. You know everything. And on the basis of what God knew, from the beginning He made His choices.

Now that is what thrills me about God choosing me. Because He don't choose no losers. God has only chosen winners. And by virtue of the fact that I have been chosen, that ensures that I am going to win. Chosen in Him before the foundations of the world. I derive tremendous comfort from that. You may say, "Well, that isn't fair that God can choose, because if He chooses who is going to be saved, then He has also chosen who is going to be lost." It doesn't say that, does it? You are adding to the scripture. Well, that is a natural assumption. Not necessarily.

The fact that God foreknows those that are going to be saved and chooses them does not preclude any man from coming, because the scripture says, "Whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely" ([Revelation 22:17](#)). And not one person has ever come to God and been turned back by God. God says, "Well, let Me see. I'm sorry, your name is not on the list. Too bad, you seem like a very nice fellow. I would like to save you, but there was a slip up in the records someplace. I guess you just can't make it." Predestination, divine election never precludes any man. You say, "But I don't think that I like that God can make these choices. Because, what if He didn't choose me?" Well, how do you know He didn't choose you? "Well, I am not a Christian." Well, why aren't you a Christian? "Well, I don't want to be." Well then, maybe He didn't choose you and it's sort of sad. But you can find out whether or not He chose you by just accepting Jesus Christ. And you will discover He chose you before the foundation of the world. You see, if there is any question in it, you can answer the question tonight. You can just say, "Lord, come into my life. I am going to be a Christian. I am going to follow Jesus Christ." And you will discover the minute that you do, that God chose you from the foundation of the world. He says, "I've been waiting for this. Great to have you on board; come on in." And then He'll show you, "I chose you, here you are. I knew exactly the time, and the whole situation. Here it is, you were chosen before the foundation of the world."

"Yea, but what if I don't want to come?" Well then again I say, it's tough, but you can't blame God. Because God has opened the door to you. And God has given you the opportunity, and God has called you to come. So though God has chosen those, still He has left the door open so that it becomes your choice also. Though God already knows the choice you are going to make. But you are the one that makes the choice, but God in all of His wisdom knows the choices each person is going to make. But He doesn't make the choice for you. He only knows in advance that which you are going to choose.

We were chosen before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love ([Eph 1:4](#)):

Having predestinated us ([Eph 1:5](#)), God's predestined plan for our lives.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

that we should be adopted as His children ([Eph 1:5](#)),

Now, when we were going through Romans, we pointed out the fact that we have been adopted as the sons of God. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, but God has predestined that we should become the adopted children by Christ Jesus.

according to the good pleasure of his will ([Eph 1:5](#)),

Now, this is a phrase you are going to find repeated, and it is an important phrase to understand. "The good pleasure of His will."

In [Revelation 4:11](#) the elders declare to God, "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honor: for thou hast created all things, and for Your good pleasure they are and were created." The good pleasure of His will. God has chosen you. God has predestined you to be His children that He might receive pleasure from your willful obedience to His will. That you might be faithful, obedient children in which the Father can take pride.

"According to the good pleasure of His will," To the praise of the glory of his grace ([Eph 1:6](#)),

That God might receive praise and glory because of His grace. wherein he hath made us ([Eph 1:6](#))

And the next blessing: accepted in the beloved ([Eph 1:6](#)):

God has accepted me in Christ. Now, I have no acceptance before God in myself. I can't go up and say, "Hey, God. I am Chuck Smith, here is my card. I want in. I want you to accept me, God, because I really tried." I have no acceptance in myself. I am only accepted in Christ, accepted in the beloved. When I stand before God, I will stand before Him in Christ, and as such, will be accepted in the beloved.

In whom we have redemption through his blood ([Eph 1:7](#)),

So the next blessing. In whom, in Christ we have redemption through His blood,

the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ([Eph 1:7](#));

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the idea of redemption is that of purchasing something back. The idea here is to purchase a slave off the market who cannot pay his debts. He has been sold into slavery, because of his inability to pay his debts. And someone now has come along and paid his debt for him, has redeemed him. I owed a debt I could not pay. I was sold into the slavery of sin. But Jesus paid the debt that I owed. He redeemed me from the slavery to the life of the flesh that I might become a child of God, forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. Oh, how glorious, the forgiveness of my sins according to the riches of His grace.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Wherein he has abounded [that is, His grace has abounded] toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself ([Eph 1:8-9](#)):

Again, the good pleasure of God, the purposes of God. And in this He has made known to us the mystery of His will. What is it? That Christ in you is your hope of glory.

That in the dispensation of the fullness of the time ([Eph 1:10](#))

That is, when the whole cycle is complete and the history of man has concluded, that he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him ([Eph 1:10](#)):

God's intention of bringing the whole universe together again into obedience and in subjection to Jesus Christ. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. There was only one government in the universe. It was the government of God, the government of light and life, and every creature within the universe that was created by God was in harmony with God, in subjection to God, and it was a beautiful, glorious universe of light and life.

But one day, one of God's glorious creatures that was perfect in beauty and perfect in wisdom and perfect in all of his ways, decided that he was going to be equal with God. He was going to exalt himself above the other angels. And was going to be as God. And with that rebellion against the will of God there came a second government in the universe. Satan as its head, the government of death and darkness. A government that is in antagonism to the first government, in rebellion against the first government, and thus, the beginning of this struggle within the universe of the good against the evil.

And we have come into time, born on this planet Earth, which happens to be sort of the center of the conflict. And we are born into a spiritual conflict, and even within us we experience the conflict of the good that I would, I often do not do, and that which I would not do, I find myself doing. And I find myself in this conflict of good and evil. And I look around at this weary world, and I see it in this conflict, and I see the tragic byproducts of the conflict. I see the suffering. I see the wars. I see the struggles. All resulting because of the initial rebellion against God. And man caught up in that rebellion. And not living as God would have him to live upon the world. For as we sang "Love, love, this is your call, love your neighbor as yourself," this is God's command, God's call to us. But men aren't living by that standard, and thus, the conflict. And thus, the miseries of the world around us. It could all be solved if we would just start living as God asks us to live.

But one day, thank God, one day Satan is to be cast into Gehenna, and all of those that have chosen to rebel with him, they will be cast into outer darkness, beyond the farthest galaxy, out into the abysmal darkness beyond the light of any of the universe. Loving darkness rather than light, God accommodates them into the eternal darkness forever.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

And within this universe of God, once more there will be just one government. And God will gather together in the fullness of times all things into Christ, and all now in subject to His authority, living in a world, in a universe of peace and glory. All in harmony now with Him, all in sync with Him once more. What a glorious universe that is going to be.

"Even in Him:" In whom also we have obtained an inheritance ([Eph 1:11](#)),

Incorruptible, undefiled, fades not away, reserved in heaven for you. If we are children of God, then we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And it is through Jesus Christ that I have become an heir to the glorious, eternal kingdom of God and to the riches of that kingdom. They are mine, and I shall enjoy them, world without end.

"In whom also we have this glorious inheritance,"

being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his own will ([Eph 1:11](#)): God's purposes cannot be defeated. That which God has purposed shall be. Thank God He has purposed that I should share with Him in that glorious kingdom. Oh thank God for His purposes. The eternal purposes of God which He has purposed in Himself after the counsel of His own will.

That we should be to the praise of his glory, because of our trust in Jesus Christ ([Eph 1:12](#)).

When you trust in His Son Jesus, God just says, "Oh, look at them, look at the trust they have." Now, many times this trust is tested. Am I going to trust in Jesus when things go bad? Do I only trust in Him when things are rosy and things are going great? I say, "Oh, man, life is sweet. Life is wonderful. Lord, I trust You for everything." But do I trust Him when it gets tough? Do I trust Him only when I can understand what He is doing? Can I trust Him when I don't understand? Now, many times God places me in situations that I don't understand to see if my trust is really genuine. And as I trust in Him in those dark places, in the places of suffering, in the places of questions, when I trust Him in those places, actually, it brings greater praise to His grace than when I only trust Him in the good times. My trust in Jesus.

In whom you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise ([Eph 1:13](#)).

God has purchased you. After you believed in Jesus, after you have trusted Him. And He went one step further, He put on me His seal of ownership. I'll tell you, that makes you feel secure. That God has sealed me. I am His; I belong to God. I have got the seal of God upon my life, His Holy Spirit which He has given to me is God's seal of ownership.

In whom we have been sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession ([Eph 1:14](#)), Or, it is the down payment.

I put an ad in the paper. I am going to sell my car, and you come along and say, "I like that car. I want to buy it. I have to go to the bank and get the money." And I say, "Do you really want to buy it?" "Yes, I want to buy it, but I have to go to the bank and get the money." "Well, then give me a deposit."

The deposit is what they call earnest money, which means I am really earnest to buy it. I am earnest in my intent to buy your car, or you are showing that you're earnest in your intent to buy my car, as this case happened to turn out. The deposit--it indicates that you are intending to go ahead and complete the purchase.

Now, God has placed His deposit on me. He has purchased me. I have been redeemed through Jesus Christ. He has sealed me, put His mark of ownership upon me, and He has paid the down payment, the deposit, until that day when He takes me into His glorious kingdom and the redemption is complete. You see, this body is not yet redeemed. I have a redeemed spirit living in a corrupted body. This body is decaying; it is going to pieces, but I have a redeemed spirit, and I am waiting for the redemption of the body. That is, the new body that I will have, the building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and therein, when I enter into that new body and am in the presence of the Lord, my redemption at that point will be complete. So in the meantime, that God might show to you that He is earnest and sincere about His purpose in redeeming you, He gives to you the deposit, the down payment of the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.

unto the praise of his glory ([Eph 1:14](#)). One day God is going to complete this transaction of my salvation, when I am there with Him in His glorious kingdom.

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and your love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers ([Eph 1:15-16](#));

This is the first of the two prayers that Paul has prayed for the Ephesians. And the one thing that I like about Paul's prayers are the directness of his prayers. And the thing that I think is a weakness in prayer, many times, is the lack of directness in prayer. I think that so often we are praying for things that are actually symptoms rather than getting to the heart of the matter. Here is John; he is having a terrible drinking problem. He has become an alcoholic. "Oh God, help John not to drink anymore. It is destroying his life. He is going down the tubes. He is drinking. God, help him not to drink anymore." So John becomes a sober sinner, rather than a drunk sinner. What does he gain outside of sobriety? His real need is salvation. But you see, we are praying for the symptoms.

But so often, as we are praying in situations, we are praying only for the symptoms. We are not getting at the heart. I think it is important in prayer to come directly to the real

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

heart, because as we pray for symptoms, we're so often are just praying that God will correct the symptom, without really getting at the cause.

That is why I love Paul's prayers. What is he praying for them? First of all,

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him ([Eph 1:17](#)):

One of the most important things that any of us can possess is the true knowledge of God. There is so much false concepts concerning God. You cannot know God by searching. That is what the friend of Eliphaz said to Job. "Who by searching can find out God?" You can't. God has revealed Himself, and it is only by revelation that you can really know God, and it is only as the Spirit opens your heart to the revelation that you can really understand God. You cannot in your intellectual quest come to an understanding of God. It takes a revelation by the Spirit of God. No man can come to the Father except the Spirit draw him. No man can even understand the Father, the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, they are spiritually discerned. God is a Spirit, they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and truth. That is an impossibility for the natural man. It takes the Spirit working in my heart, the Spirit of revelation in the wisdom and in the knowledge, the understanding of God. And Paul is praying that God might reveal Himself to them by the Holy Spirit. That is the only help and the only hope that I have of ever knowing God, is through revelation of the Spirit.

That the eyes of your understanding [once I have come to understand God] being enlightened; that then I might know what is the hope of his calling ([Eph 1:18](#)),

Remember the first thing that Paul was excited about, he was chosen in Him. Oh, if you only knew what the hope is for those that God has called to be His children. You would never, never, never have a problem with death again. You would never have a fear of death. You would never grieve for a child of God who died, if you only knew what is the hope of our calling. We have such peculiar concepts of death. "Oh, what a shame, he was so young. He had everything going for him, his whole life in front of him. What a tragedy his life was snuffed out so early." That is because you don't know the whole calling of the believer. Tragedy for us maybe, because we are going to miss him, but not a tragedy for him. He is there in the presence of the Lord. He doesn't have to go through all of the hell and suffering on this earth. Your life on this earth is all of the hell you are ever going to know. For those that aren't saved, their life on this earth is all of the heaven they're ever going to know.

If you only knew what was the hope of your calling. If you only knew what God has in store for His children. If you only knew the glory that awaits us as children of God. You see, it would correct the false attitude that we have towards the world and the things of the world.

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

Now, rather than Paul saying, "Oh God, they are getting so embroiled in the world with things, help them to begin to have a distaste and all for those things and all." No, he just prays at the heart of the issue. They don't know what God is preparing for them; they are discouraged because they have lost sight of the glory that God is going to reveal in them. And so he gets right to the heart of the issue, "God, enlighten them as to the hope of their calling. Let them know God, what You have got in store for them. They won't become discouraged anymore, Lord. They only know the glorious things that await them when they get to the end of the road."

When I realize what God has waiting for me. I tell you, it gives me the strength, the energy, the courage, all that I need to go on. If you only knew the hope of your calling. If you knew, what were the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints ([Eph 1:18](#)),

Now this is interesting. Watch out now. He is not talking about your inheritance here. He is talking about His inheritance, and this to me is a mystery.

If you only knew how much God treasured you. I have never thought much of that. I have thought a lot about my treasures in God. But God treasures me? Do you remember Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is liken unto a man going through a field and discovering a treasure." ([Matthew 13:44](#)). Now when you attribute that parable, the treasure turns out to be you. And the person who gave everything to buy the field, the world, in order to obtain the treasure is Jesus. He values you so highly that He gave His life to redeem you, to purchase you. You are His treasure.

What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe, according to the work of that might power ([Eph 1:19](#)),

If you only knew the resources that are available to you as a child of God. The resources of God are now yours. The strength of God, the peace of God. They all become yours, these glorious resources. "Oh God, help them to realize the resources they have if they will just call upon You." That power that is available to them. That same power

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand ([Eph 1:20](#)),

That same power of the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is the power of the Spirit that dwells in you and is going to make alive our mortal bodies, by His dwelling in us. If you only knew what the exceeding greatness of the power of the Spirit of God. Power available. It has set Christ, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion ([Eph 1:20-21](#)),

These are rankings of the spirit beings in the universe. Christ is far above all of these spiritual beings, far above every principality and power and might and dominion.

and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in the one to come ([Eph 1:21](#)):

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

And he has put all things under his feet ([Eph 1:22](#)), The authority, the power that He has given to Jesus to reign.

and gave him to be the head over all [power that He has given to Jesus to reign. And He gave Him to be the head over all] things to the church ([Eph 1:22](#)),

Christ, the head of the body of the church, over all things to the church. Christ, the head of the body, the church.

Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all ([Eph 1:23](#)).

John MacArthur : Bible Introductions - Ephesians

Title

The letter is addressed to the church in the city of Ephesus, capital of the Roman province of Asia (Asia Minor, modern Turkey). Because the name Ephesus is not mentioned in every early manuscript, some scholars believe the letter was an encyclical, intended to be circulated and read among all the churches in Asia Minor and was simply sent first to believers in Ephesus.

Author and Date

There is no indication that the authorship of Paul should be in question. He is indicated as author in the opening salutation ([1:1](#); [3:1](#)). The letter was written from prison in Rome ([Acts 28:16–31](#)) sometime between A.D. 60–62 and is, therefore, often referred to as a prison epistle (along with Philipians, Colossians, and Philemon).

Background and Setting

It is likely that the gospel was first brought to Ephesus by Priscilla and Aquila, an exceptionally gifted couple (see [Acts 18:26](#)) who were left there by Paul on his second missionary journey ([Acts 18:18, 19](#)). Located at the mouth of the Cayster River, on the east side of the Aegean Sea, the city of Ephesus was perhaps best known for its magnificent temple of Artemis, or Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. It was also an important political, educational, and commercial center, ranking with Alexandria in Egypt, and Antioch of Pisidia, in southern Asia Minor.

The fledgling church begun by Priscilla and Aquila was later firmly established by Paul on his third missionary journey ([Acts 19](#)) and was pastored by him for some 3 years. After Paul left, Timothy pastored the congregation for perhaps a year and a half, primarily to counter the false teaching of a few influential men (such as Hymenaeus and Alexander), who were probably elders in the congregation there ([1 Tim. 1:3, 20](#)). Because of those men, the church at Ephesus was plagued by “fables and endless genealogies” ([1:4](#)) and by such ascetic and unscriptural ideas as the forbidding of marriage and abstaining from certain foods ([4:3](#)). Although those false teachers did not

Commentary on Ephesians 1, by Chuck Smith 2.18.24

rightly understand Scripture, they propounded their ungodly interpretations with confidence ([1:7](#)), which produced in the church harmful “disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith” ([1:4](#)). Thirty years or so later, Christ gave to the Apostle John a letter for this church indicating its people had left their first love for Him ([Rev. 2:1–7](#)).

Historical and Theological Themes

The first 3 chapters are theological, emphasizing NT doctrine, whereas the last 3 chapters are practical and focus on Christian behavior. Perhaps, above all, this is a letter of encouragement and admonition, written to remind believers of their immeasurable blessings in Jesus Christ; and not only to be thankful for those blessings, but also to live in a manner worthy of them. Despite, and partly even because of, a Christian’s great blessings in Jesus Christ, he is sure to be tempted by Satan to self-satisfaction and complacency. It was for that reason that, in the last chapter, Paul reminds believers of the full and sufficient spiritual armor supplied to them through God’s Word and by His Spirit ([6:10–17](#)) and of their need for vigilant and persistent prayer ([6:18](#)).

A key theme of the letter is the mystery (meaning a heretofore unrevealed truth) of the church, which is “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” ([3:6](#)), a truth completely hidden from the OT saints (cf. [3:5](#), [9](#)). All believers in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, are equal before the Lord as His children and as citizens of His eternal kingdom, a marvelous truth that only believers of this present age possess. Paul also speaks of the mystery of the church as the bride of Christ ([5:32](#); cf. [Rev. 21:9](#)).

A major truth emphasized is that of the church as Christ’s present spiritual, earthly body, also a distinct and formerly unrevealed truth about God’s people. This metaphor depicts the church, not as an organization, but as a living organism composed of mutually related and interdependent parts. Christ is Head of the body and the Holy Spirit is its lifeblood, as it were. The body functions through the faithful use of its members’ various spiritual gifts, sovereignly and uniquely bestowed by the Holy Spirit on each believer.

Other major themes include the riches and fullness of blessing to believers. Paul writes of “the riches of His [God’s] grace” ([1:7](#)), “the unsearchable riches of Christ” ([3:8](#)), and “the riches of His glory” ([3:16](#)). Paul admonishes believers to “be filled with all the fullness of God” ([3:19](#)), to “come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” ([4:13](#)), and to “be filled with the Spirit” ([5:18](#)). Their riches in Christ are based on His grace ([1:2](#), [6](#), [7](#); [2:7](#)), His peace ([1:2](#)), His will ([1:5](#)), His pleasure and purpose ([1:9](#)), His glory ([1:12](#), [14](#)), His calling and inheritance ([1:18](#)), His power and strength ([1:19](#); [6:10](#)), His love ([2:4](#)), His workmanship ([2:10](#)), His Holy Spirit ([3:16](#)), His offering and sacrifice ([5:2](#)), and His armor ([6:11](#), [13](#)). The word “riches” is used 5 times in this letter; “grace” is used 12 times; “glory” 8 times; “fullness” or “filled” 6 times; and the key phrase “in Christ” (or “in Him”) some 12 times.